

## **Public Comments e-mailed or US mailed for consideration by committee**

*Comments inclusive of those received up to Sept. 13, 2011*

- 3 comments received in July

- 32 received in August

- 5 received in September

*Numbers in parenthesis indicate how many individuals made this comment*

1. Don't close ISD. (24)
2. Communication
  - a. Signing was difficult with family. (6)
  - b. Full language access is paramount.
  - c. I had no language comprehension in the public school.
3. Mainstream Challenges
  - a. There was little opportunity for socialization. (8)
  - b. I was lonely. (7)
  - c. I was bullied. (4)
  - d. It was a struggle. (3)
  - e. I did not have friends at school. (3)
  - f. There were limited extracurricular opportunities. (2)
  - g. There was no direct communication with teachers (2)
  - h. I was depressed. (2)
  - i. There was inadequate communication. (2)
  - j. I hated school. (2)
  - k. I did not sign at school.
  - l. I lacked identity.
  - m. There were lower academic expectations for me.
  - n. Schools had limited resources for my child.
  - o. There were long bus rides and this limited me being able to have friends or to be in extracurricular activities.
  - p. Friendships were harder in middle school.
  - q. Teachers do not have enough time to spend with D/HH students.
  - r. There was limited access to everything.
  - s. I felt different.
4. Interpreters
  - a. Interpreters lacked in skill. (3)
  - b. There was an interpreter shortage. (3)
  - c. My interpreter protected me too much.
5. It costs the same (as ISD) or more to send students to mainstream. (4)
6. Don't move ISD. (4)
7. Don't establish regional programs. (4)
8. Separate the deaf and blind students. (4)
9. There are good community connections at ISD. (2)
10. There is history at ISD/made good memories. (2)
11. It's okay to merge ISD and IBSSS.
12. The buildings are in good condition at ISD.
13. Advantages at ISD:
  - a. Socialization and self-esteem increase. (12)
  - b. It is more than a school (satisfies my educational, social, personal needs) (11)

- c. There are extracurricular opportunities at ISD. (11)
- d. I felt normal. (7)
- e. Deaf culture is experienced/learned at ISD. (6)
- f. There is direct communication at ISD. (5)
- g. There is help for multi handicapped students. (3)
- h. There are deaf role models at ISD. (3)
- i. My child's academics improved. (3)
- j. Living in the dorm teaches life skills. (2)
- k. There are leadership opportunities at ISD. (2)
- l. ISD is the language-rich environment (LRE). (2)
- m. ISD provide a safe environment. (2)
- n. There was full participation for me at ISD.
- o. I thrived at ISD.
- p. ISD was a pivotal point in my daughter's education.
- q. There is the Lewis Central mainstream program at ISD.
- r. ISD is the least restrictive environment (LRE).
- s. I matured at ISD.
- t. There is ASL at ISD.
- u. There is equal access at ISD.
- v. There is bicultural/bilingual opportunities at ISD.
- w. My child's independence increased.
- x. There is incidental learning at ISD.

### **Suggestions:**

1. Recruit students from other states. (2)
2. Recruitment for each campus should be discussed.
3. Charge families a small tuition fee to help finance costs.
4. Use parent volunteers for some campus positions to help finance costs.
5. Students who are blind/visually impaired should mainstream one year at IBSSS to interact with peers sharing the same disability.
6. Consolidate statewide services at ISD.
7. A national expert should present to the committee.
8. Educate parents statewide that ISD is an option.
9. Committee should become familiar with Child First Campaign (CEASD).
10. Compare ISD costs with that of a public school, if residential costs were included.
11. Partner with IWCC for business and vocational classes.
12. If ISD relocates, put it in central Iowa.
13. Look for ways to get other d/hh students to enroll at ISD.
14. Consider designating ISD as the state agency responsible for oversight of all d/hh students in Iowa.  
Use Jay Innes as a consultant for this project.
15. Refer to information on reading to deaf children, visual learning/visual language, bilingual/bimodal approaches and putting research into practice (attached) for solid research of visual language and teaching methodologies.

### **Comments:**

1. Regional programs would provide a continuum of educational services.
2. Regional programs help students experience critical mass of D/HH peers.
3. Regional programs help students be comfortable with deaf and hearing students.
4. Regional programs help students learn to use interpreters in variety of situations, have a variety of interpreters (decreases dependency on just one interpreter) and learn to advocate for selves when interpreter is required.

5. Regional programs help share qualified permanently licensed interpreters.
6. Interpreters must be qualified and be skilled language models.
7. Schools do not know how to evaluate interpreter skill levels.
8. Temporary licenses are issued without demonstrated interpreter skill.
9. Mainstreamed students are often graduated expecting to succeed in college but are unprepared.
10. Regional programs have teachers of the D/HH who are effective language models.
11. Auditory and visual language strategies are not taught by special ed teachers, although many D/HH students in Iowa are taught by special ed teachers rather than D/HH teachers.
12. Standards and benchmarks can only be achieved with instruction by D/HH teachers, not special ed teachers.
13. There are mainstream opportunities with regional programming.
14. A 60-minute commute to school is acceptable.
15. North Dakota's hearing/vision program has implemented short-term programming.
16. It is important to avoid isolation with D/HH students.
17. One size does not fit all with D/HH students.
18. Power Point by Hank Klopping was submitted:
  - a. In the mainstream setting, there is increased isolation, decreased ASL, deaf community, friends, and teachers of the D/HH as well as decreased supervisors who know about teaching D/HH.
  - b. Statewide systems are fragmented.
  - c. It is essential that these collaborate: CEASD, parent/family-centered organizations, educational departments, parent support centers, community leaders, politicians/staff
  - d. Consider the whole child system of the National Agenda
  - e. Consider the NASDE Guideline Training
19. I am concerned how placement decisions are made. Are they really least restrictive environment?
20. If you do not meet the child's communication needs, it is not a least restrictive environment.
21. Interpreters do not remove communication barriers.
22. ISD is the least restrictive environment.
23. Audism may be experienced at the local school.
24. Will more students attend in central Iowa?
25. Will staff have to be retrained?
26. Will Iowa lose Nebraska students?
27. It is expensive to build a new campus.
28. There is a strong deaf culture in Omaha/Council Bluffs.
29. The distance from home is a disadvantage at ISD.
30. There are few deaf role models in Vinton.
31. Everyone signs at ISD.
32. There is farmland at ISD- room to build a school for the blind.
33. History runs deep at ISD.
34. ISD is close to Lewis Central/IWCC/Boys Town.
35. There is good interstate access at ISD.
36. There are videophones in each building at ISD.
37. The advantage to centralizing administration is more contact with the legislators and the Board of Regents.
38. The disadvantage to centralizing administration is there would be less contact between the students and the superintendent.
39. Deaf school superintendents should sign.
40. Parents have a choice of mainstream or ISD, but a choice will be gone if ISD closes.
41. You can merge the two schools but keep the students separate.
42. Don't turn your back on those capable of learning, but not hearing.
43. The education of B/VI can be handled in the regular school.

44. Much of what we learn in school is not in the classroom but in cafeteria, hall and recess.
45. Children need to freely exchange information and secrets to develop a sense of self-worth and belonging.
46. No matter how skilled an interpreter is, something is always lost in translation.
47. Only with a total immersion provided by a school for the deaf can these special children reach their considerable potential.
48. Mainstreaming is a terrible act of exclusion for the deaf child.
49. Do not meet at the AEAs.
50. 51% of the committee should be deaf.
51. You don't know what it's like to be deaf.
52. Grow the school- advertise.
53. We are the People of the Eyes and we love who we are. We function in and deal with your culture daily. Must we be fully assimilated in it as well?
54. Dr. George Propp at the University of Nebraska found there should be at least 120 students to make a program viable/whole community for a child.
55. ISD has evolved throughout the years to meet the changing needs of students, families and the community.
56. The ISD Foundation looks at ways to successfully support ISD financially.
57. ISD has expanding programs to help people from all over the state learn to sign.
58. ISD will continue to evolve and innovate on what could be next.
59. I had not even known of its (ISD) existence. AEA does a very poor job of letting people know – it seemed they were more inclined to pushing the children into the local school districts.
60. Developing deaf students to become responsible citizens and tax payers will result in positive returns through income taxes, in contrast to living off welfare and other government supports/ISD has been a great investment for the state of Iowa.
61. Closing down the Braille school is a bad idea.
62. If I were to be president of a school where you learn French or Chinese, shouldn't I know these languages? Shouldn't the superintendent know Braille or Sign?